CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A system adapted to enable contextual collaboration within a computer network, comprising:

      a collaboration manager adapted to support manipulation of collaboration spaces, said collaboration spaces containing one or more collaboration elements having potentially different collaboration modalities;

      a context manager adapted to maintain resources and resource interrelationships within contexts, said resources including at least one of collaboration elements, processes, tasks, business objects, users, and roles; and

      a view generator adapted to select a set of said resources to be displayed to a user of said computer network.

2.   The system in claim 1, further comprising an interface adapted to allow applications to specify commands to manipulate collaboration spaces, commands to maintain resources and resource interrelationships within contexts, and queries for context-sensitive views.

3.   The system in claim 2, wherein said commands to manipulate collaboration spaces include:

      managing lifecycles of said collaboration spaces;

      maintaining membership lists, user profiles, and role associations in said collaboration spaces;

      adding and removing said collaboration elements; and

      performing modality-specific operations on said collaboration elements.

4.   The system in claim 2, wherein said commands to maintain resources and resource interrelationships include:

      creating, deleting, opening, and closing of said contexts;

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adding resources and associations between said resources in said contexts; and

removing said resources and said associations from said contexts.

5. The system in claim 2, wherein said queries for context-sensitive views include:

retrieving resources related to a given context;

retrieving resources related to a given resource within a context; and

retrieving resources related to a given resource across contexts.

6. The system in claim 1, wherein said collaboration manager is operatively coupled to a collaboration space directory adapted to store information on collaboration spaces.

7. The system in claim 6, wherein said collaboration manager is further operatively coupled to a collection of adapters adapted to connect to external collaboration capabilities, said adapters each implementing a standardized and modality-specific interface.

8. The system in claim 1, wherein said context manager is operatively coupled to a context model adapted to describe associated resources and resource interrelationships.

9. The system in claim 1, wherein said view generator is operatively coupled to a set of view rules adapted to specify policies for view generation.

10. A system adapted to provide collaboration between different applications used by multiple users in a computerized network, said system comprising:

at least one collaboration space supporting different modes of collaboration, wherein said users collaborate through said different applications using said different modes of collaboration maintained in said collaboration space; and

application program interfaces connecting said collaboration space to said applications, thereby making collaboration content available to all said applications, such that all said collaboration content is transparently accessible by said users natively from within each application.

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11.   The system in claim 10, further comprising a contextual view generator adapted to select a limited set of resources maintained within said collaboration space to be displayed to a user of said computerized network based on user needs.

12.   The system in claim 10, further comprising a collaboration manager adapted to maintain said collaboration space.

13.   The system in claim 12, wherein said collaboration manager is further adapted to create, delete, archive, and search and query said collaboration spaces.

14.   The system in claim 12, wherein said collaboration manager is further adapted to interact with collaboration technology servers.

15.   The system in claim 10, wherein said application program interfaces are adapted to create instances of collaborative interaction within said collaboration space.

16.   A method for enabling contextual collaboration within a computer network, said method comprising:

creating collaboration spaces containing one or more collaboration elements of potentially different collaboration modalities;

maintaining resources and resource interrelationships within contexts, said resources including at least one of collaboration elements, processes, tasks, business objects, users, and roles; and

selecting a set of said resources to be displayed to a user.

17.   The method in claim 16, further comprising:

managing lifecycles of said collaboration spaces;

maintaining membership lists, user profiles, and role associations in said collaboration spaces;

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adding and removing said collaboration elements; and

performing modality-specific operations on said collaboration elements.

18.   The method in claim 16, wherein said maintaining process comprises:

creating, deleting, opening, and closing said contexts;

adding resources and associations between said resources in said contexts; and

removing said resources and said associations from said contexts.

19.   The method in claim 16, wherein said selecting process comprises:

retrieving resources related to a given context;

retrieving resources related to a given resource within a context; and

retrieving resources related to a given resource across contexts.

20.   The method in claim 16, further comprising storing information on collaboration spaces.

21.   The method in claim 16, further comprising redirecting operations on said collaboration elements to external collaboration capabilities.

22.   The method in claim 16, further comprising using a context model to describe resource associations and resource interrelationships.

23.   The method in claim 1 6, further comprising maintaining a set of view rules adapted to specify policies for view generation.

24.   A method of providing collaboration between different applications used by multiple users in a computerized network, said method comprising:

establishing at least one collaboration space supporting different modes of collaboration,

permitting said users to collaborate through said different applications using said different modes of collaboration maintained in said collaboration space; and

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making collaboration content available to all said applications, such that all said collaboration content is transparently accessible by said users natively from within each application.

25. The method in claim 24, further comprising selecting a limited set of resources maintained within said collaboration space to be displayed to a user of said computerized network based on user needs.

26. The method in claim 24, further comprising maintaining said collaboration space using a collaboration manager.

27. The method in claim 26, wherein said maintaining includes, creation, deletion, archival, and search and query of said collaboration spaces.

28. The method in claim 26, wherein said maintaining includes said collaboration manager interacting with collaboration technology servers.

29. The method in claim 24, further comprising creating instances of collaborative interaction within said collaboration space using application program interfaces.

30. A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for enabling contextual collaboration within a computer network, said method comprising:

creating collaboration spaces containing one or more collaboration elements of potentially different collaboration modalities;

maintaining resources and resource interrelationships within contexts, said resources including at least one of collaboration elements, processes, tasks, business objects, users, and roles; and

selecting a set of said resources to be displayed to a user.

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31. The program storage device in claim 30, further comprising:

managing lifecycles of said collaboration spaces;

maintaining membership lists, user profiles, and role associations in said collaboration

spaces;

adding and removing said collaboration elements; and

performing modality-specific operations on said collaboration elements.

32. The program storage device in claim 30, wherein said maintaining process comprises:

creating, deleting, opening, and closing said contexts;

adding resources and associations between said resources in said contexts; and

removing said resources and said associations from said contexts.

33. The program storage device in claim 30, wherein said selecting process comprises:

retrieving resources related to a given context;

retrieving resources related to a given resource within a context; and

retrieving resources related to a given resource across contexts.

34. The program storage device in claim 30, wherein said method further comprises storing

information on collaboration spaces.

35. The program storage device in claim 30, wherein said method further comprises

redirecting operations on said collaboration elements to external collaboration capabilities.

36. The program storage device in claim 30, wherein said method further comprises using a

context model to describe resource associations and resource interrelationships.

37. The program storage device in claim 30, wherein said method further comprises

maintaining a set of view rules adapted to specify policies for view generation.

38.   A service for enabling contextual collaboration within a computer network, wherein said service:

creates collaboration spaces containing one or more collaboration elements of potentially different collaboration modalities;

maintains resources and resource interrelationships within contexts, said resources including at least one of collaboration elements, processes, tasks, business objects, users, and roles; and

selects a set of said resources to be displayed to a user.

39.   The service in claim 38, wherein said service further:

manages lifecycles of said collaboration spaces;

maintains membership lists, user profiles, and role associations in said collaboration spaces;

adds and removes said collaboration elements; and

performs modality-specific operations on said collaboration elements.

40.   The service in claim 38, wherein if said service maintains said membership lists, said service:

creates, deletes, opens, and closes said contexts;

adds resources and associations between said resources in said contexts; and

removes said resources and said associations from said contexts.

41.   The service in claim 38, wherein if said service selects a set of resources to be displayed, said service:

retrieves resources related to a given context;

retrieves resources related to a given resource within a context; and

retrieves resources related to a given resource across contexts.

42.   The service in claim 38, wherein said service further stores information on collaboration spaces.

43.   The service in claim 38, wherein said service redirects operations on said collaboration elements to external collaboration capabilities.

44.   The service in claim 38, wherein said service uses a context model to describe resource associations and resource interrelationships.

45.   The service in claim 38, wherein said service maintains a set of view rules adapted to specify policies for view generation.